Adina Hoffman

Mrs. An

History FRQ

2/27/2013

Anti- Semitism in Europe

During the late 19th and early 20th century anti- Semitism began to reprise for the Jewish nation after having been almost non-existent during the Enlightenment and French Revolution. Anti-Semitism can be seen throughout Europe through the anti- Jewish pogroms, the Dreyfuss Affair in France, and the creation of Nazism in Germany.

Anti- Semitism can be shown though the surplus of anti- Jewish pogroms going on throughout Eastern and Western Europe. There were many anti- Jewish pogroms especially in Russia and Poland. These pogroms started to rise after the Pale of Settlement was formed. The Pale of Settlement was an edict which forced Jewish people to convert to Orthodox Christianity. The Warsaw Pogrom in 1881 is another good example of the anti-Semitic views of the Russian authorities. Twenty nine people were killed in a stampede caused by a false alarm. It was rumored that two Jewish people had falsely created an emergency. This rumor was the source of riots, violence, and rejection against Jewish people, stores, businesses, and residences. This pogrom ruined any hope of a Polish- Jewish relationship, and many historians believed that this pogrom was started by Russian authorities in an attempt to accomplish exactly that. All of this reinforced anti-Semitism in what was becoming Nazi Germany as Hitler rose to power. Hitler’s infamous pogrom called Kristallnacht was carried out by SA paramilitary and civilians. Many Jews were killed during this riot and thousands were subsequently brought to concentration camps. Although this atrocity was happening right before their eyes, German authorities looked on without intervening and supported the behaviors of the masses. This alone shows the completely harsh anti-Semitic views of the German authorities and general public at the time. Mass genocide of the Jewish population carried out by government approved vigilante groups created fear and perpetuated hate. Therefore one can see how Anti- Jewish pogroms throughout Europe showed the radical anti- Semitism of the time.

Leading up to the Dreyfuss affair, the French government had implemented social, political, and economic reforms which were very harsh on French society and caused an era of austerity for the people. This made the general population very angry and in their looking for an outlet for their anger, the large amount of Jewish immigrants from Russia was an easy target. This made it easy for the government to charge and convict Alfred Dreyfuss unfairly of treason. In 1894, the French army found out that a spy was sending French artillery information to the Germans. As the only Jewish artillery officer in the French army, Dreyfuss was immediately arrested and questioned for treason. Despite the large amount of evidence that he was innocent, Dreyfuss was still declared guilty. This sparked a new era of anti-Semitism in France, a country seemingly founded on equal rights for all citizens. The ease of convicting a seemingly innocent person based on ethnicity rather than evidence` was a symptom of a disease that had crept into French life. Therefore, it can be seen that anti- Semitism was a problem in France during the Dreyfuss Affair.

Through the creation of Nazism in Germany, one sees the obvious development of anti- Semitic beliefs during the 1900s. Following the Treaty of Versailles which stated that WW1 was Germany’s fault, Germany is left in embarrassment and financial depression. It becomes apparent that Jews tend to become an easy scapegoat to blame for people’s problems. Therefore Germany blamed the Jews for their pitfalls regarding WW1. As Hitler took power he persuaded German citizens to believe that the Jews were the cause of their problems. Through these persuasions, Hitler and the Nazis came to the conclusion that “The Final Solution” was the climax event of their new order. This solution condemned all Jews to oppression and death. Also, this new order established the idea that Nazi\Aryans were the master race and they had the ability to conquer any ‘race’ lower than them especially the Jews. All of these ideas lead up to the mass murder of Jews in concentration camps, ghettos, and medical experiments. Therefore Nazism is a clear, concrete example of anti- Semitic beliefs in Germany at the time.

In conclusion, Anti-Semitism can be seen throughout Europe through the anti- Jewish pogroms, the Dreyfuss Affair in France, and the creation of Nazism in Germany. The Warsaw pogrom and Kristallnacht are two cases of anti-Semitic riots in both Eastern and Western Europe during the late 1800s and early 1900s. While the Dreyfuss affair, is yet another perfect example of discrimination and incrimination based upon religion and ethnicity. Lastly, the amount of anti- Semitism in Nazi Germany before and during the Holocaust completely shows how people were persecuted solely because of their religion.